

Journal of the Royal Society of Arts

NO. 4914

FRIDAY, 11TH DECEMBER, 1953

VOL. CII

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

TUESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, AT 5.15 p.m. JOINT MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECTION AND THE EAST INDIA ASSOCIATION. THOMAS HOLLAND MEMORIAL LECTURE. '*The Ascent of Everest: with some notes on technical and scientific problems*', by Wilfrid Noyce, M.A., a member of the Expedition. Sir Harry Lindsay, K.C.I.E., C.B.E., a Vice-President of the Society, will preside. (The lecture will be illustrated with lantern slides. Tea will be served from 4.30 p.m. Admission by special ticket only.)

WEDNESDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, AT 2.30 p.m. '*The Work of the Wright Brothers for Aviation*', by J. Laurence Pritchard, C.B.E., Hon.F.R.Ae.S., late Secretary, Royal Aeronautical Society. The Right Honble. Lord Sempill, A.F.C., Past President, Royal Aeronautical Society, will preside.

MONDAY, 4TH JANUARY, AT 6.30 p.m. FILM EVENING. (Details of this meeting will be given in the next issue of the *Journal*.)

JUVENILE LECTURES

Tickets are now available for the two Juvenile Lectures, suitable for children of twelve years and over, which are being given this year under the Dr. Mann Trust. As already announced in the programme of meetings, the following two lectures have been arranged:

WEDNESDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, AT 2.30 p.m. 'Smugglers', by Rupert C. Jarvis, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., Librarian, H.M. Customs and Excise.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH JANUARY, AT 2.30 p.m. 'International Show Jumping', by Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Llewellyn, C.B.E., M.A., M.F.H.

Fellows are entitled to apply for tickets to admit one adult and two children to each lecture. In view of the popularity of these lectures they are advised to apply early, stating the exact number wishing to attend on each occasion.

THE SOCIETY'S CHRISTMAS CARD

All copies of the Christmas card have now been sold.

K U W A I T

A paper by

G. A. P. SOUTHWELL, C.B.E., M.C.,

*Managing Director, Kuwait Oil Co., Ltd., read to
the Society on Wednesday, 25th November, 1953,
with Sir Wavell Wakefield, M.P., in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: It is a very great pleasure for me to be chairman for this lecture during the Society's 200th Session, which as you know was opened last week by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, the President. I am sure that all of us here are delighted to know of the satisfactory progress of Her Majesty The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in their great undertaking across the other side of the world.

Reference has been made since the accession of our young Queen to the New Elizabethan Age. I doubt if ever there was any story in the Old Elizabethan Age, or in the Elizabethan Age which we hope will develop in the immediate future, as romantic as that of Kuwait. There is nobody, I think, more qualified to talk upon the subject of Kuwait than our speaker to-day. For seven years he has been the managing director of the Kuwait Oil Company. It is under his drive, initiative and inspiration that that great enterprise has gone ahead so rapidly, and indeed it is difficult for us to realize in this country quite what we would do if we did not have the supply of oil coming to assist us from Kuwait.

Our speaker has had wide experience in the oil industry, from New Guinea in the east to Trinidad in the west, where in his early days he was Government Petroleum Technologist. During the war, as no doubt many of you know, his responsibilities included that very interesting and important development of obtaining oil in our own country here in the Midlands.

I had the pleasure of visiting Kuwait just over a year ago, and I can speak from personal experience of the happy atmosphere that exists out in the oil fields there. It was the beginning of the rugby football season in the desert, and they asked me to talk to them. At the end of my address, when certain demonstrations were being given, the chairman removed my black dinner jacket tie, and I believe it is still on the notice-board there. I want to assure our speaker this afternoon that his chairman is not proposing to remove his tie or anything else at the conclusion of his address.

I do not think we could have anybody more qualified to speak on this subject of Kuwait, because the developments taking place there do need somebody like our speaker to-day to give us the information on what is happening in the Middle East, which is so vital not only to this country but indeed to the whole free world.

Without further ado I have the greatest possible pleasure in calling upon Mr. Southwell to address us upon the subject of Kuwait.

The following paper, which was illustrated with lantern slides and a film, was then read:

THE PAPER

It is over twenty-one years since I first visited the Arab state of Kuwait, and I am often asked 'What was Kuwait like then?' My reply is very brief because it could best be described then as 'a place where courtesy and friendliness

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KUWAIT

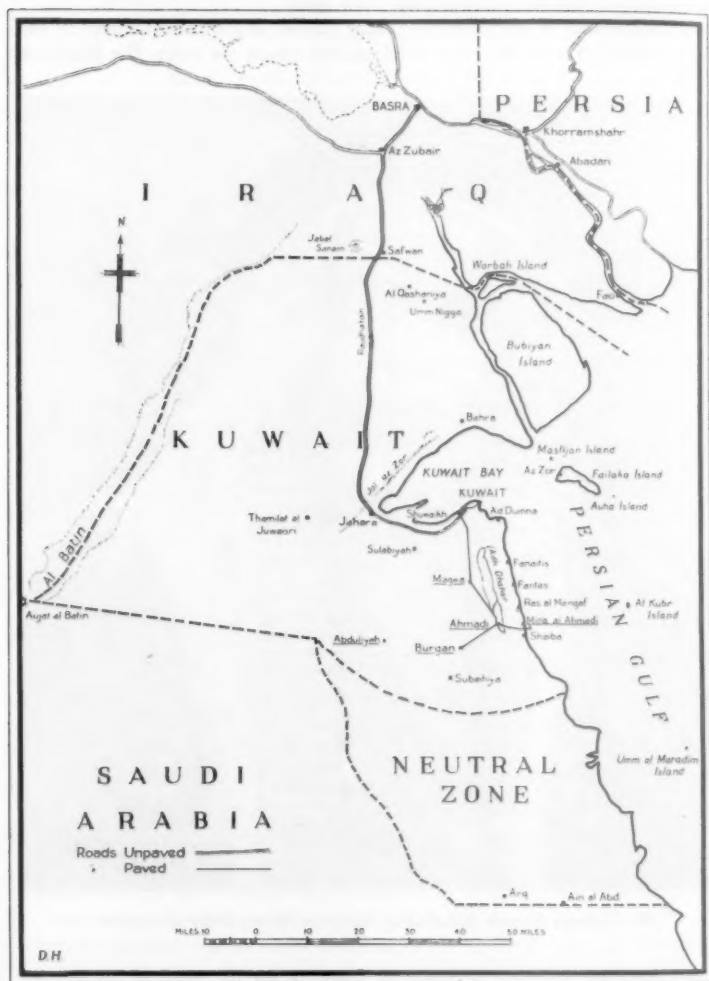
predominated'. Since then, however much the impact of modern developments has changed the ways of life, it has not changed this fundamental characteristic of Kuwait as I first saw it twenty-one years ago.

The importance of oil production from Kuwait in the oil commerce of the world, combined with the great developments which the ruler, His Highness



His Highness Shaikh Abdullah as-Salim as-Subah, Ruler of Kuwait

Shaikh Abdullah as-Salim as-Subah, is fostering for the good of his people, has resulted in this Arab state being given considerable publicity in the world press. In view of this and as a background to this talk, I should like to give an outline of the history of this Arab state, so that members of the Royal Society of Arts who are not familiar with it will be the better informed.



Fellows of this Society, celebrating its 200th anniversary, will be much interested to know that the present Arab Shaikhdom of Kuwait, in size nearly as large as Wales, has a history of some two hundred years. The State is bordered on the east by the waters of the Persian Gulf, and on the north and west by Iraq, and on the south by Saudi Arabia. Between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, a neutral zone based on tribal grazing is established, within which Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have equal rights.

In general, it is undulating except for the south-west corner where it reaches some 900 feet above sea level, and an entirely desert terrain. In the summer, the region presents a picture of nature in her severest mood, for apart from a few oases and recent developments in gardens and tree planting, the area is almost entirely unrelieved by any form of vegetation. Between October and March, however, during which the three to four inches of annual rainfall occur, the desert is transformed. Flowers and plants in great variety make their appearance, and the general scene—whilst still a desert—is very different, with its tinges of green, from that during the extreme heat of the summer.

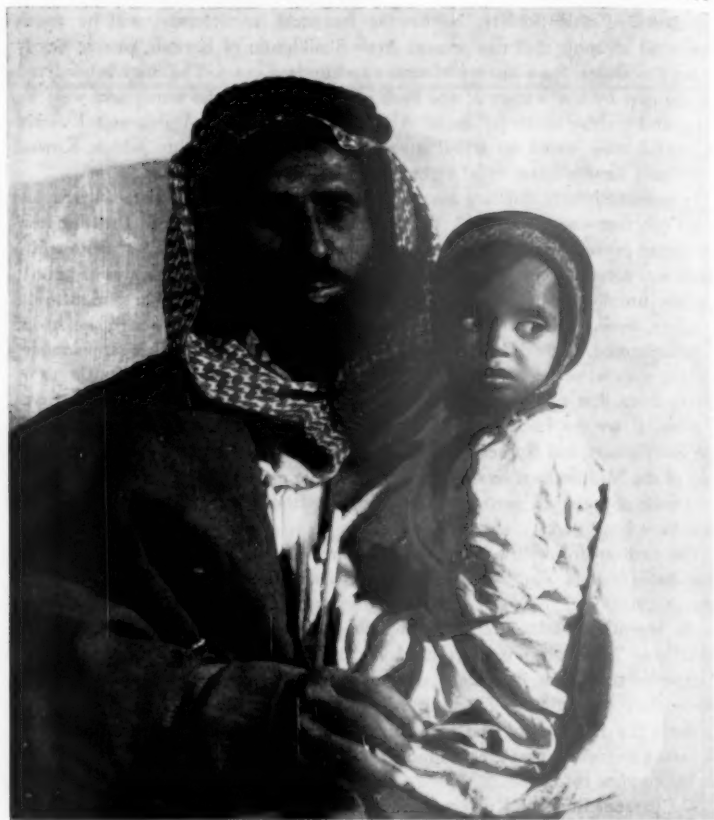
Now, if we go back into the earlier history of this area, in the days of the Babylonian and Sumerian Empires, six or seven thousand years ago, this part of the Middle East was, we believe, a fertile plain well capable of becoming the cradle of mankind in commerce, of which, although no records exist, Kuwait may have been part.

The earliest link with ancient times so far found in Kuwait is a stone which was discovered in 1937, bearing a Greek inscription: 'SOTEL(ES) AN ATHENIAN AND SOLDIERS (?) TO ZEUS SAVIOUR POSEIDON ARTEMIS SAVIOURS'. According to the legends, Soteles and his men belonged to the fleet of a Greek admiral, Nearchus. Their ship was wrecked in 325 B.C. whilst on an expedition for Alexander the Great, and they arrived on the shores of the present Kuwait, where they gave thanks for their rescue. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese, the first Europeans since the Greeks to be recorded as having arrived in that area, found a good anchorage and built a fort, of which no trace exists to-day.

The present State of Kuwait came into being in 1716, when Arabs from the northern part of Central Arabia settled there, selecting for their settlement the site of the present capital of Kuwait, where a very limited source of drinking water could be obtained by digging shallow wells. 'Kuwait' in Arabic proper means 'a little fort', but in the local dialect of Kuwait it is the name given to these water wells.

The position of this settlement is, of course, very well placed on the south side of the vast bay with its large area of sheltered water. It is near, but not too near, the joint estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates where these rivers flow into the Persian Gulf, and readily accessible to a great variety of caravan routes into the interior of Arabia.

These Arab settlers were noted as intrepid sailors who made a modest living from fishing and pearling. With the sea as their support, it was quite natural that there should be a demand for boats, and a thriving boat-building industry



A Badawin and his child

soon established itself, numbering over 2,000 shipwrights, and constituting to all intents and purposes a shipbuilding guild which imported all the materials they required for building sailing dhows.

It is interesting to record that the celebrated Danish explorer, Niebuhr, describing a visit to Kuwait in 1760, stated that the town had about 10,000 inhabitants and some 800 vessels. It was in those days, as it is to-day, the end of the trail for those living a nomadic existence in that part of Arabia. The town had a fluctuating population depending on the seasons of the year and whether a proportion of the population were away caravan trading, or with the fishing and pearling fleets.

The present dynasty can be said to have started in 1756 when Shaikh Subah abu Abdullah of Umm Qasr, between thirty and forty miles south of Basrah, seized power in Kuwait. Some twenty years after this, Basrah was captured by Karim Kham of Persia and this resulted in trade being diverted to Kuwait, and the East India Company made Kuwait the southern terminal of their overland mail route to Turkey, so starting British contact with Kuwait.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century, Kuwait was subjected to desert raids by the Wahhabi from the interior of the Arabian mainland, but the presence of the British Navy saved the town from capture. During these years there was little, if any, increase in the population of Kuwait, but by 1860 it was the most important town on the Persian Gulf and attracted hundreds of craft, owing to the healthy although severe climate, the friendliness of the inhabitants, and the splendid anchorage. In those days, ideas were common in Western minds of a railway from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf in order to improve communications with India, but these schemes were rendered unnecessary by the opening of the Suez Canal.

The strategic importance of Kuwait at this time, to the Western countries, presented problems of considerable historical interest, of which time does not permit a detailed discussion, but fortunately for the people of Kuwait, Shaikh Mubarak, who succeeded in 1896, was a very astute and capable man, and a treaty between Shaikh Mubarak and Great Britain was concluded on 23rd January, 1899, Great Britain promising protection in case of need. A year after this treaty, in 1900, arguments arose as a result of a party of German railway engineers arriving on Kuwait with the object of establishing a railway terminal, on the Persian Gulf, of the projected Berlin-Baghdad railway. Shaikh Mubarak, in view of his treaty obligations, refused to permit this development.

About this time, a dynastic struggle was taking place between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid for the sovereignty over the kingdom of Nejd in Central Arabia. Ibn Saud as a young man was given asylum in Kuwait by Shaikh Mubarak, from whom he acquired the political skill which stood him in such good stead in later years. It was from Kuwait with a small band of loyal followers that Ibn Saud captured Riyadh in 1901; this first success led ultimately to the subjugation of the whole of Arabia. King Ibn Saud was a good friend to Britain, and we all mourn the loss of this great warrior king.

As a result of Ibn Saud's success, the position in Kuwait became stabilized, and in 1913 negotiations between Britain and Turkey resulted in a treaty which recognized the independence of Kuwait from Turkish suzerainty and the special treaty relationship of Kuwait with Great Britain. It was, however, not long before war with Turkey broke out on 5th November, 1914, and on 6th November, a British Expeditionary Force landed at Fao at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab, and, in co-operation with Shaikh Mubarak, occupied a number of Turkish strong points.

It is interesting here to record an incident which resulted in the adoption by Kuwait of the existing Kuwait flag, as up to that time it had been customary for the Kuwaitis to use the Turkish flag. A Kuwaiti vessel had a shot fired

across her bows by a British patrol vessel, thinking that she was a Turkish boat, and so as to avoid any further incidents, the Shaikh of Kuwait decided on the present standard consisting of the word 'KUWAIT' in white lettering on a red ground.

This great benefactor of his country, Shaikh Mubarak, died in January, 1915, but friendly relations with Britain continued under his successor Shaikh Salim, and Kuwait's co-operative attitude was of great assistance in the Mesopotamian campaign of the First World War. At the end of this period in 1919, differences arose with Ibn Saud over the southern boundary, with the result that a number of Wahhabis attacked Shaikh Salim's guards, a minor battle taking place at Jahara 25 miles from Kuwait, in which Shaikh Salim's forces had to withdraw. As a result, a great town wall with forts was rapidly built, four miles long and 14 feet high, as a protection for Kuwait, and to-day it still surrounds the older part of the town.



Gateway in the town wall

Shaikh Salim's nephew, Shaikh Ahmad Ibn Jabir, paid a visit to Ibn Saud in 1921 to negotiate a satisfactory outcome of the troubles, but during this visit his uncle died, and Ahmad returned to become the ruler of Kuwait. He immediately established friendly relations with both Ibn Saud and Britain, and under Shaikh Ahmad, Kuwait commenced an era of increasing prosperity during which the most outstanding event of the inter-war years was the conclusion of an oil concession to the Kuwait Oil Company in 1934.

On the 29th January, 1950, Shaikh Sir Ahmad al-Jabir as-Subah died after thirty years of rule, and he was succeeded by his cousin, Shaikh Abdullah as-Salim as-Subah, who had been Minister of Finance for many years, with the fullest support of all the Kuwait people.

This briefly gives the picture of the historical background which now has as its foreground the development of oil, together with one of the most rapid municipal and social developments which the world has seen. The population of Kuwait to-day is probably about 200,000, of which some two-thirds reside in the capital town of Kuwait or in nearby villages. The majority have their origin in the tribes of Nejd, belonging mainly to the Sunni sect of Islam and incline to the more puritanical forms of their religion. They have a great sense of propriety, and above all, attach an immense importance to dignity and politeness. Their high code of honour and astuteness in commercial affairs, is based on many decades of struggle with the commercial problems to be met at one of the gateways to the Arabian continent.

Of the minorities, the Baharna who came originally from Bahrain are important in forming, as it were, a boat-building guild, and in addition there is a small Persian community.

Outside the capital town, the settled population is small, being confined to a number of villages situated along the coast, where the main occupation is fishing. In the interior the inhabitants are nomadic Badawin occupied with sheep grazing, and with them the laws of the desert, rather than international frontiers, decide their actual movements.

The old town of Kuwait, now rapidly being modernized, consisted until recently of dwelling houses and municipal buildings of typical Middle Eastern construction, built mainly of coral from local reefs, cemented together and finished with limestone plaster, many having traditional architectural features of considerable beauty. One feature which all visitors note is the teak doors of the old houses with handsome carving, which are a result of the tradition of carving brought in by the boat-building industry.

The establishment of an exporting oil industry in Kuwait in 1946, soon resulted in it becoming the dominant factor in the State's economy, and in the present era of prosperity it is not easy for visitors to-day to appreciate how severe has been the Kuwaitis' struggle with an environment of arid desert and sea.

It is, of course, well known that oil companies operating on a large scale in areas undeveloped technologically have a significance beyond the purpose for which they exist. They represent not only the economic organization of the



Old waterfront

West, but its industrial society, and are the sources from which the peoples concerned draw their conclusions about the West. All those who serve in or have a part in servicing these areas must be fully conscious of the need to show the highest standards of technical skill and integrity of conduct to justify the confidence shown by the inhabitants in western partnership in developing their economy.

Changes in the social structures in Kuwait are occurring at a rapid pace, and in return for the oil the West needs, it has a moral responsibility to offer friendship and assistance in the process of modern development. The aims of the great majority of the Arab people who see good not only in their own, but in Western civilization as well, are to preserve and enrich the Arab heritage, yet to live in a modern world on an equal footing with other peoples without breaking completely with the past.

The conquest of malnutrition and disease and their replacement by better physical conditions of life, are not enough in themselves. Such developments, however beneficial, do not dampen national aspirations; they tend to encourage these through the realization of what technology can do when blessed with valuable sources of raw materials. There is ambition to make up lost ground, for, as

developments take place, they are reminded of former times and the greatness of earlier Arab history. Industrial tranquillity is difficult to achieve under these conditions, and can only be obtained by the fullest understanding, by the technologists and others of the West, of the Arab viewpoint, by co-operation in the common application to a vital task, and by the elimination of race consciousness in the communities working there.

Now, the scientific examination of a desert territory for oil, involving geological and geophysical activities, requires but few skilled people and little of the mechanization and technology of the West, even at the stage where the early scientific work is followed by test drilling to confirm or disprove the scientific assessment. This work causes little local disturbance and its effect is usually beneficial, as the men concerned with it are well versed in all the problems involved, and it is customary for them to become very friendly with the relatively small number of people of the country with whom they come in contact, or who assist them in their work.

The work on these lines resulted in oil being first encountered in a bore hole in 1938, to be followed by further test drilling to confirm the results, before the planning of a full development involving vast expenditure could be justified. This was the position in the early days of the war, at which time the technically qualified men and large quantities of materials, particularly steel, were not available. As a result, operations were curtailed to the minimum until 1945, when arrangements were put in hand to plan ahead so that oil from this territory could be made available to the world's oil markets.



The oil port of the Kuwait Oil Company



A street in Old Kuwait

I refer particularly to this phase so as to indicate that it was not until 1946 that these oil developments played a major part in the life of the State, but then changes came rapidly. The planning of these developments in a barren desert area some twenty to thirty miles from the town of Kuwait produced many difficulties. Technical problems as such did not create much difficulty as the planning was carried out on the basis of sound scientific knowledge of the conditions experienced in the earlier work, and it was possible to take the fullest advantage of the most modern technical developments both in Britain and America.

The main problem was to plan the servicing and provision of water, food, accommodation, all materials and skilled labour, as local supplies and services available in the State were only adequate to cope with the town itself, and were therefore non-existent in so far as the major oil development was concerned.

It will be remembered that in 1946, the world was faced with a shortage of supply, as industries had not then reverted to peace-time requirements, and so it was necessary to divide the programme into two: immediate improvisation

taking the fullest advantage of war disposals materials of every type first, and then the ordering, manufacturing, shipping and installing of the permanent scheme.

This major industrial development had to be planned in two separate phases: first the provision of temporary facilities, not only for the living conditions but also for the production and shipping of oil, and secondly, the complete engineered scheme which started later, its progress depending on the provision and arrival of equipment and materials which were in short supply in the immediate post-war years. As developments were undertaken during these difficult years, it was necessary to have resort to the maximum improvisation and to make use of surplus war stores when these could be obtained, and to obtain equipment and materials from many other unconventional sources.

The problems of improvisation are a story in themselves, and time does not permit me to give details of them, nor of the permanent facilities. By 1950 all services, much of the accommodation, and one of the largest oil terminals in the world had been completed, and oil was being shipped at the rate of approximately 20 million tons per annum. To-day, it is over twice that figure.

During this period, the present Ruler with the support of all his subjects, was applying himself to the task of doing his best for his people with his vastly increased revenue—a task requiring much courage, wisdom and vision. He has concerned himself in the first place with the provision of water for all purposes, education of the young, and the improvement of public health.



A street in Modern Kuwait



Opening of state water distillation plant

Kuwait's first need is, of course, water, as any artesian supply so far discovered (and considerable geological investigations have been made) contains an appreciable salt content. As far as is known, the Kuwait desert has not been cultivated in the past to the extent it has to the north, where the remains of cultivation in past ages can be seen and where the great river system of the Tigris and Euphrates was used for irrigation purposes. Kuwait town's traditional supply came from this source in wooden tanks brought by sailing dhows, but now approximately one million gallons a day of drinking water have been made available by the completion of the first stage of a sea-water distillation unit of generally similar design to the 700,000 gallons a day unit which had been installed by the oil company in their area some years previously. It is understood that the second million part of the town scheme will be completed in 1955.

In addition, salty artesian water has been developed some miles from the town, and pumping stations and pipelines enable this to be made available in the town for either mixing with the distilled water, or for industrial uses.

Now that Kuwait town has a limited indigenous supply by means of distillation, thought has been given to a supply from the Shatt-el-Arab where the Tigris and Euphrates flow over the Iraq border to the north. It is assumed that this supply, if subsequently installed, will be either by pipeline or canal, or a combination of the two, and will be available for irrigation purposes in Kuwait. In this case, it opens up a vista of many possibilities. This prospect would make it possible for the State to plan amenities and to consider agriculture which otherwise would not be possible except to a very limited extent.

Great strides have also been made in education: expansion started some time before oil royalties were paid, but since 1945 many schools have been built. The present educational system is divided into three stages: primary, in which only Arabic is taught, intermediate, and secondary, in which English is taught as a second language. A large number of primary schools have been built, with separate schools for boys and girls, suitably sited so as to be near the centres of population. Equipment and teaching materials are unstinted, and the children receive free meals and medical treatment.

Secondary school considerations have resulted in the development of an educational centre outside the present town. A large secondary school and a technical school are nearing completion, and there is every evidence that this will develop into a very fine educational centre. One has only to see the children at school in Kuwait, to realize how splendidly the problem has been approached, and the happy benefit that they are obtaining from it. In addition, young Kuwaitis are being sent abroad to study in this country and other countries, with funds provided by the State and the Oil Company.

Faced with the shortage of skilled labour and tradesmen, the Oil Company some years ago inaugurated a technical training school in which young Kuwaitis are trained in a number of trades. All trade trainees spend three months in basic training where they receive educational instruction and get acclimatized to workshop or other working conditions. The training centre provides facilities for some 300 trainees, but in view of the increasing opportunities for work in



New school building in Kuwait

the town, a number of trainees take employment there. Following on from the training centre, trainees receive instruction 'on the job'. It is very encouraging to those responsible for these training schemes to see the diligence and aptitude which the trainees are showing in the training curriculum provided.

In considering medical developments, one must appreciate that Kuwait, whilst it has a very severe climate with an enormous temperature range from the cold winds of the winter to the dry heat of the summer, is a healthy place, the lack of water making it free from normal tropical diseases, which are water-bred. Nevertheless, tuberculosis and eye troubles are medical problems for which a large medical service is necessary. The present State medical service is in the process of development by the State Health Director around a nucleus of British and Arab doctors, and in addition, public health services spreading out into the villages are also in process of organization.

The main town hospital built in, I think, 1949, is not large enough and new hospitals are being planned or built, including a tuberculosis hospital which is nearing completion, and sanatorium facilities. The developments of the state medical service in such a short time are very remarkable.

In regard to the general town planning, the town itself is undergoing many changes: sections of the old bazaars are being pulled down and replaced by modern shops, and one can assume that most of it will be rebuilt as the means and tastes of the citizens change, and it is understood that new development has been arranged to fit in with an overall town planning development taking into account the advice of planning experts.

The next major project to be undertaken will be the development of the Kuwait town port facilities, so as to obviate the need for lightering all materials required by the town from several miles out. The first stage of this has recently been completed, and there is no doubt that when this is finished and the necessary houses built to meet the more modern conditions and the increased population, the town of Kuwait will take its place as one of the most modern cities in the Middle East.

Those with experience of large-scale developments have every sympathy with the Ruler and State officials over the many administrative difficulties which now have to be faced. In order to assist in this great task the Ruler has engaged experts in nearly every department of the activities.

The Kuwaitis have been quick to adapt themselves to the changing conditions. In many cases, traditional skills have helped them to become proficient in new occupations. Arab seamen accustomed to the rigging of sailing ships, find no difficulty in coping with the most modern hoisting and rigging devices; Badawin herdsmen have readily become road-builders; pearl-divers have readily learned to weld, and carpenters in the shipbuilding industry have become building operatives.

Along with these major problems, the Ruler has a financial problem of unusual magnitude. Wisely he has regarded the increased revenue as capital, part of which should be conserved by investment for the future but permitting a suitable proportion to be allocated to the large undertaking of immediate development.

The oil production is being carried out in a happy spirit of partnership between the Company and the Ruler and his people, and I was indeed glad to receive an invitation to talk to the Royal Society of Arts about Kuwait. It gives me an opportunity to record the gratitude of myself and my colleagues, for the assistance and co-operation which we in the Kuwait Oil Company have received from His Highness the Shaikh, from the officials of the Kuwait Government, and from the people of Kuwait. Without these, it would have been quite impossible to have reached the present stage of oil development in such a relatively few years.

DISCUSSION

MR. W. J. THOMAS: I wonder if Mr. Southwell could look ahead five or ten years, because, as I understand it, there has been a tremendous influx of labour, the population has increased tremendously, and even if some of the immigrants from the adjoining countries return, there will still be a number of Kuwaitis for whom employment has to be found in the future. Is it thought that Kuwait will develop any secondary industries or depend entirely on the oil industry and marketing and local trade?

THE LECTURER: It is likely that there will be an expansion in minor industries. I have already illustrated what has been done in boat building. They have had nearly two hundred years of boat-building with imported materials, so it is not unreasonable to anticipate the development of other industries using imported materials. They will, of course, have full employment of labour for a good many years on State developments.

MR. K. H. TUSON: The lecturer has shown us some pictures of trade training schools. I was in Libya last week, where the same problem of trade training for the Arab is extremely important. Great difficulty is found there in keeping the boys at school throughout the period to complete their training because their parents remove them very soon in order to help support the family as messengers or in other unskilled occupations. Could the lecturer tell us whether the same trouble is experienced in Kuwait with trade training, and whether any means have been found of dealing with the problem?

THE LECTURER: That is a problem that is known in this country; it is not peculiar to the Arab world. All I can say, so far as Kuwait is concerned, is that there is naturally a tendency for boys to leave before they are completely trained if they can earn money, but we are extremely gratified by the way that many are completing their training course, which we follow up by training on the job afterwards. A good proportion are going right through with it. We have been very successful, but we have been extremely fortunate in the people selected to administer the training centre and their enthusiasm for it.

MR. T. DEWHURST: I was at Burgan in the spring of 1937 and the transformation that has taken place since then must, I think, be unique, even in the remarkable history of the petroleum industry.

During the past few years, we have heard and read a great deal about President Truman's Fourth Point, which is that the more advanced nations should help in the development of the under-developed and undeveloped countries, and I think Kuwait provides a most wonderful example of what has been done in the furtherance of that project. In fact, I think the oil industry has probably done more than any other agency to further President Truman's Fourth Point.

There should also, I think, be greater awareness of the financial hazards of oil

exploration, and a great appreciation of the high administrative skill and the high standard and variety of scientific knowledge and of technical know-how required in order to discover and to develop oil fields to the maximum advantage of all concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Southwell emphasized the importance of water, and indicated the ways in which water was being obtained and might be obtained. I wonder what his views are on the possibility of bringing water from underground streams in the Persian hills across the Persian Gulf?

I should also like to ask if he can give any indication of how long the oil supply is likely to exist in Kuwait. A great amount of money is now being spent on buildings, hospitals, education and so on, but a time will presumably come when the large sums in royalties which are being paid to the Ruler each year will no longer exist, and, apart from the developing of secondary industries to which reference has been made, how long is this revenue likely to last, and what will happen to the State of Kuwait when that oil revenue vanishes?

THE LECTURER: I will deal with the oil side first. It is a very large source of oil and there is no question of it suddenly coming to an end. Like all oil fields, if you go on exploiting them over long periods you get to a stage where you get normal declines. But there are instances where oil fields have been exploited almost since the first oil well in the United States was started, nearly 100 years ago, and are still producing. It is a case of a general decline in production; this does not suddenly cut out. Assuming the demand for the oil, and assuming that the conditions are suitable politically and otherwise for it to be produced, then there is no question of the royalties suddenly ending.

As far as the water is concerned, it is quite obvious that I will have to give Sir Wavell a semi-geological lecture, because I myself do not believe in underground rivers in the way water diviners do. I admit there are underground rivers in fissures and so on, but I have been brought up in the school that believes that water, like oil, is to be found in the pore spaces of rocks. I really do not think any underground rivers are likely to be found with quite such a long route as the hundred miles across the Persian Gulf.

BRIGADIER J. L. P. MACNAIR: I should like to ask the lecturer one question about oil equipment. Does the company find difficulty in obtaining new equipment, specialized equipment, from anywhere but the United States? Do you look on the United States as your main supplier, or are British engineers in a position to fulfil some, at any rate, of your requirements?

For example, a year or so ago I saw a drawing of a piece of equipment for removing sand and impurities from crude oil, of which an American company made a speciality, although in point of fact there would not be any very great difficulty in a British company designing and producing such a machine. That is only one example, but there are other types of machines.

I have the impression, I may be wrong, that the British engineering companies have felt that the Americans have got such a large start on us that they are reluctant to embark on risky experiments in equipment of which, perhaps, they have not had a great deal of experience, and I would like to ask the lecturer if the policy of the Kuwait Oil Company could be such that British engineering firms could submit, at the expense of the company rather than at their own expense, trial equipment of that sort? That would provide the British engineering industry with a new outlet which I feel, in view of our interests in oil, would be extremely valuable.

THE LECTURER: Vast sums of money are being spent in this country on all types of equipment for oil developments. There have been enormous strides in recent years, but one must not forget the war period. After the war, you could not get delivery of many things, but, taking the whole period of the last twenty years, there have been

vast sums of money spent in this country by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and other British oil companies, on equipment made in this country. I think to-day it is only the more specialized items which are not made in this country. I think there is a far greater amount being manufactured here than you might think if you were not familiar with it.

MR. C. E. CLARK: With the vast irrigation projects in Northern Iraq, is it safe to rely on the lower reaches of the Shatt-el-Arab as a source of fresh water?

THE LECTURER: The State has provided its own indigenous supply by evaporation, which is adequate for immediate needs as far as health is concerned. In addition there is a brackish water supply which is available for a limited amount of agriculture. After that it is a question of good relations between neighbours, and I believe it could be well worth while.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before we leave, I am sure it is the wish of you all that on your behalf I should express a very warm vote of thanks to our lecturer this afternoon for the brilliant and informative lecture he has given us. It is quite obvious that he has spent much time and trouble to give us such a fascinating talk.

I was particularly interested, in the film which we have just seen, to notice how the latest and most up-to-date engineering facilities of the modern world are there side by side with methods employed two thousand years ago. It does show the tremendously rapid growth of modern industry side by side with the customs and traditions of earlier times.

I think all of us are deeply grateful to Mr. Southwell for giving us an insight into the history of Kuwait, and a glimpse of the tremendous developments now taking place there which are of such vital importance to the well-being of our country and, indeed, the whole free world.

May I, on behalf of this gathering, thank the lecturer very much indeed and wish him and his company all success in that extremely vital and important undertaking in which they are engaged.

The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation.

THE LECTURER: I should like to thank Sir Wavell Wakefield for his introductory remarks and for the kind observations that he has just made. I am very gratified, and so will my colleagues be, that he has taken the chair to-day. You do not know what pleasure it will give those men, particularly the rugby players, when I can say that I sat next to Sir Wavell Wakefield to-day, wearing his Kuwait tie, in view of the fact that he kicked-off at one of our rugby matches over there. If only more people like Sir Wavell would be public spirited in this way we would have even better human relations than we have, and I should like to thank him very much.

MR. A. C. HARTLEY, C.B.E. (A Member of the Council): I am sure that, although Mr. Southwell has already thanked Sir Wavell, you would wish yourselves to accord to him your own very sincere thanks for taking the chair this afternoon.

It was particularly appropriate because he has been to Kuwait; and Fellows will also remember his interest in our Society—he has, in fact, served on our Council. It was also particularly appropriate that one who has played such a part in rugby football and sports, in overseas settlement and in the provision of playing fields, should take the chair to-day.

We thank you, sir, for your introductory remarks which prepared our minds so well to receive this fascinating lecture, and it is we, I feel, who are honoured by your coming here to-day. It has been a very great pleasure.

The vote of thanks to the Chairman was carried with acclamation, and the meeting then ended.

THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF ARTS IN ROME

The Selwyn Brinton Lecture by

ION S. MUNRO

*delivered to the Society, on Wednesday, 2nd December,
1953, with Sir Gerald Kelly, President, Royal
Academy of Arts, in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: I have been trying to find out what I ought to say about the Society. I am told that as an Institution you are fourteen years older than we are. In spite of that, or because of it, there has never been any quarrel between the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

I have been asked to read this paper to inform you that the lecture you are about to receive is given under an endowment of the late Mr. Selwyn Brinton, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, who gave two important annual prizes to students of the British Academy of Arts in Rome. The primary purpose of his bequest, which now unfortunately cannot be carried out, was the continuance of those prizes. The alternative use of the endowment was the delivery of lectures, of which Colonel Munro's lecture is to be one.

I do not know anything about the British Academy of Arts in Rome; it was before my time. I shall not detain you, for anybody in my position must take to heart that awful story. As a rule, I do not tell stories, I try to make you laugh by my own ingenuity, but this time I am going to tell you my favourite story. They invited Lord Birkenhead, when he was Mr. F. E. Smith, to come to Birmingham to give an address on some subject, and as the fee was adequate he agreed to go. He arrived in the hall, and he was introduced, just as I am introducing Colonel Munro. The old gentleman mandered on for about twenty minutes, people got more and more bored, 'F. E.' got more and more impatient, and when at last the old boy said 'Well, perhaps I have said enough, and I will now ask Mr. F. E. Smith to give us his address', 'F. E.' got up and said, '16, Gardenhouse Terrace,' and sat down. Lest I get Colonel Munro into that same state of exasperation, I shall now sit down.

The following lecture, which was illustrated with lantern slides, was then delivered:

THE LECTURE

The British Academy of Arts in Rome was closed down in the early months of 1936. The minute and account books, letters from artists and statesmen associated with the Academy in the past, and other records concerning the one hundred and fifty years or so of the institution's life were put into a small deed box. This box was consigned to the British Consulate. On Italy's declaration

I wish to thank Lady Unwin, Mrs. Gerald Brooks, and Mr. Severn Storr for kind permission to quote from the Severn letters belonging to them. I also express my gratitude to the authorities of the Royal Academy and the Keats Memorial House, Hampstead, for allowing me access to their archives; and to the British Museum and the Foreign Office for help in my researches. I.S.M.

of war in 1940, the box was transferred to the British Embassy at the Porta Pia. Our Embassy has now changed its quarters to another part of the city, and I have been regretfully informed¹ that no trace can be found of the box.

It had been my intention to revisit Rome to check my facts from these papers for the purposes of this lecture. Instead, with a personal recollection of the correspondence and references contained in the missing papers, I have sought the London ends of the same references, and found them in the eighteenth and nineteenth century archives and library of Burlington House, in the Severn holograph letters at the Keats Memorial House at Hampstead, and in the files of *The Times*. Data and impressions from 1924 onwards are based on my own notes and papers from Roman days as a member of the Academy Committee in its closing sessions and on information given me during many years' close friendship with its last Director.

Despite all such research there will be, perforce, gaps in my narrative, but for that very reason it seems to me all the more urgent that every possible piece of information about the hitherto neglected history of the British Academy in Rome should be brought together. Indeed the purpose now behind this lecture is to provide a starting point for any future art historian examining the changing influences of classic and romantic Rome on British art from the eighteenth century until the present day—changes faithfully shadowed in the fortunes of the Academy in Rome over that long period of years.

The British Academy of Fine Arts in Rome had its tentative beginnings in the coterie of English and Scottish artists working in Rome during the last decades of the eighteenth century. They were part of the cosmopolitan influx which made Rome the heart and centre of the classical revival, revolutionizing all the arts at that epoch. Many of these artists returned to add new glories to their native art; some to become identified with the early days of the Royal Academy in London—Romney, Copley, Benjamin West, James Northcote, Raeburn; and some also to be associated with this Royal Society of Arts—Joshua Reynolds, Richard Wilson and James Barry, whose typically neo-classic allegories adorn this hall.

The British artists carried their London customs to Rome—and foregathered in a coffee-house, the Café Inglese in the Piazza di Spagna. This café, now disappeared, was decorated with frescoes by Piranesi for his English friends,² and it is no doubt there that he often met Robert Adam, with such gracious and happy consequences for Georgian architecture and design of which the building wherein we are at this moment seated provides such a glorious example.

It is therefore not surprising that the Royal Academy in London within two years of its foundation turned its thoughts to Rome, and in 1771 inaugurated its Gold Medal travelling scholarships, with the bursary money payable in Rome.

The earliest direct evidence of a corporate life in the Rome community of British artists is an entry in the Council minutes of the Royal Academy of 12th August, 1797, recording a letter of collective thanks to the Royal Academy for having secured exemption from customs duty for books and casts required for their studies. And a holograph note, also dated 1797 and found by chance



Photo: Anderson

The Lawrence portrait of George IV, now in the Vatican Gallery, which hung in the rooms of the British Academy of Arts in Rome in 1823

in an old book belonging to the French artist Jean Baptiste Vicar, marks an appointment at the quarters of the English group, given as the Vicolo Aliberti³—almost part of the Via Margutta where the Academy was ultimately housed, as we shall see.

But in that same year of 1797 the clouds of war had already darkened European skies, and Bonaparte's army invested Piedmont. The Napoleonic Wars broke up art life in Rome as far as the British were concerned and stifled the germination of a British academy there for eighteen years, until the Treaty of Paris (1815), when the flow of artists from British to Italian shores began again. And by this time Rome had two new neo-classic attractions as a world art centre—the sculptor Antonio Canova and his Danish rival in Rome, Thorvaldsen—both at the top of their power and influence. Yet, among the earliest post-war British travellers to Rome was a genius destined to invest the classic scene with new vision, new colour and new passion—for it was in 1819 that Turner made the first of his three pilgrimages of art to Italy.

Then in 1821 the young London art student, Joseph Severn, accompanied the dying poet, Keats, to Rome. We all know the sad story: how Severn attended and soothed John Keats during his fatal illness in their lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna, how Severn saw his friend laid to rest in the Protestant Cemetery by the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, and how Severn was laid by his side nearly sixty years later (1879).

Severn continued in Rome after the death of his companion; and he not only won a Royal Academy Gold Medal scholarship, but he brought much needed organizing ability and energy into the English colony of artists with a view to founding the academy on a proper financial basis and to establishing life classes. He communicated with various possible patrons, and from the British Minister at the Court of Naples, Mr. William Hamilton, he received £100 towards his project, with the advice to open an Academy Investment Fund. This suggestion urged Severn to raise the question with the Royal Academy through its President, Sir Thomas Lawrence: a Rome Academy run by private subscriptions, or a Rome Academy under the wing of the Royal Academy?

Severn's letter,⁴ dated October, 1822, passing on his dilemma to London, shows that it was not the first time he had written to Sir Thomas Lawrence, because he begins by saying, 'We have once more the honour to write you the proceedings of our thriving Academy which still increases so well in its objects and means that we have now an equal satisfaction to ask your advice'.

The point was political rather than financial. The dignity of official backing from London was desirable. Severn explains that the intrigues in Papal Rome were such that 'at present as Englishmen we cannot meet together without being noticed, and it causes us a little pain though no interruption, that the place and manner of our meeting should not be more in character with the English nation'.

The good Sir Thomas squared the circle. In the kindest manner he wrote to Severn that the difficulty of presuming to legislate for him at such a distance, at once deterred him from the attempt.⁵ But at the same time he commented

to his Council⁶ that he 'conceived it would be worthy of the *parent institution*'—significant phrase—to present the English artists in Rome with some mark of the liberality of the Royal Academy and of its wish to promote so laudable an undertaking⁷.

He also extolled the liberality of the British Minister in Naples, and recommended to Severn that on convivial occasions the name of Mr. Hamilton should be established among the artists in Rome as a first standing toast.

In addition to the interest expressed by other members of the Royal Academy, Lawrence himself sent a donation of £50 and arranged an annual contribution of £10; and the Royal Academy gave £100 and four sums of £50 each. The Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Bedford, and Sir Watkin Wynn also contributed £100 each. And on top of all that, His Majesty King George IV was graciously pleased to give his official sanction to the scheme and to the title 'THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF ARTS IN ROME', backing this up with a royal gift of £200.⁷

Severn joyously acknowledges all this in a letter dated in May, 1823. He writes to Sir Thomas Lawrence⁸: 'we one and all feel raised by this Royal attention, whether we consider it as giving a local habitation and a name to our infant institution, or as a fine compliment to our noble pursuit'. The management of the Academy was assumed by a committee of seven artists elected by ballot from among the resident members. The seven artists in that year of 1823 were: Charles Eastlake, Seymour Kirkup, Richard Evans, John Bryant Lane, Joseph Severn, John Gibson, and Richard Westmacott, junior. Other members of the period included Etty, Lawrence Macdonald, Cattermole, and other names destined to become prominent in the annals of British art.

Meanwhile Severn had got the Academy settled into working quarters. He solved that question by including it in the solution of his own housing problems. Writing to his father early in 1822, he tells him: 'I have removed into the place I have been a long time trying to get'.⁹ It was Number 18 Via Sant'Isidoro.¹⁰ Severn goes on: 'There are six rooms all giving into each other. The first is our Academy where fourteen Englishmen meet every evening to study. The second is my painting room, 20 feet by 30, with a glorious light. The third is filled with original studies. On the sunny side I have my breakfast room hung around with copies of Raphael and Rubens—two large folding windows open on to a balcony and look all over magnificent Rome. You will be astonished that I give no more than £9 per year for all these rooms, unfurnished, and the Academy pays £9 more, but I have the use of it all day'.

Going on to somewhat gruesome details, he adds: 'I have just purchased a fine skeleton for £1, and we are expecting a dead body to-morrow morning, from which we are determined to be perfect in anatomy. It is to be dissected in one of my lofts.'

In lighter note he writes his brother Tom in the same year, 1822¹¹: 'We had a droll affair here the other night. Soon after our Academy had met, my old servant tapped at the door and said that there were thieves in the house. In an instant, our model, who is very strong and honest leaped down from the throne,

seized a large stick and, stark naked, went off in pursuit of them half way down the street, much to the alarm, and then hilarity, of the ladies of the house below'.

He goes on to tell of a wild night out: 'We English artists behaved badly during all the Carnival. One night we went to the theatre, nine of us, with the object of kicking up a row. We took three boxes and by way of having each others company, we broke the boxes, making them into one by knocking the sides out. But we did not get into prison for this is a jolly time in Rome. . . .

'There are many architects here. The fact is there is a society of Englishmen, all good fellows, twenty in number, painters, sculptors and architects. You would think this place solitary. It is quite the contrary'.

Turner in 1829 was again in Rome, lived with Eastlake, and associated with the Academy life. Work, recognition, and funds all progressed, and in 1844 Queen Victoria authorized Sir Robert Peel to contribute £300 to the funds of the Academy 'as a mark of the interest which Her Majesty takes in the welfare of the Institution'. There were many other distinguished patrons and the money collected was invested and the interest appropriated to the current expenses of the school.

George Richmond, the portrait painter, joined the company about 1838, but growing tension between the Church and the anti-clericals, fierce and bloody political episodes, troop movements and the rising tide of the Italian Risorgimento began to affect the numbers of British artists going to Rome for anything but fleeting visits. Severn became increasingly engrossed in diplomatic missions for the British Government, and we hear no more from him about the progress and life of the young Academy or its members. In 1861 he became British Consul.

About that same time, not only the British Academy of Arts in Rome, but the Royal Academy in London came under the examination of a Royal Commission headed by Earl Stanhope, Viscount Hardinge, Lord Elcho, Sir Edmund Head and others, and it is to the Report of the Commissioners,¹² that we turn for continuing information.

Questioned by Lord Elcho, Charles Eastlake—now Sir Charles, and President of the Royal Academy—recalled the formation of the Academy in Rome when he was there some forty years back, as I have already described it from the original correspondence. He said that Severn, Gibson, Westmacott, junior, Richard Wyatt and himself were the chief promoters of the plan and emphasized the sense of importance which the Royal Academy attached to the project.

The Chairman of the Commission, Lord Stanhope, asked Sir Charles if he thought it desirable that some eminent professor should reside at Rome as the Head of the Academy of Art there and exercise some superintendence?

Sir Charles thought that was desirable and also that the institution should be such as to allow the students opportunities of mixing with other artists. He also agreed that its advantages should also be extended to include architects. The Chairman then asked: 'If such a system were established, would it not be advantageous that the professor, whom we suppose to be at Rome, and the students under him, should be a branch of the Royal Academy, and considered

as part of its jurisdiction?' (This is the very question that Severn put to Lawrence, it will be remembered.)

Sir Charles answered: 'That is a question for a Commission to consider. I cannot answer for the Royal Academy further than by expressing my conviction that they would not shrink from the trouble; and I have already said that they would be too happy to consent to a larger expenditure if they could do it with safety as regards their own prospects, and in a right direction'.

A number of prominent artists of the day (1863) were then asked in succession by the Commission if they thought development of the Rome Academy and a residence there for art students were a good thing. Here are some of the answers:

Landseer: 'Certainly. There can be no doubt about it. I would not limit the time of residence'.

Maclise: 'I do not think it any longer indispensable'.

C. W. Cope: 'Undoubtedly—after a student has done something for himself and is able to appreciate works of art'.

Marochetti: 'Yes, for sculptors'.

Watts: 'To establish a branch Academy at Rome on a similar system to that of France would be a great improvement on the present system'.

Ruskin was asked: 'If you have travelling scholarships, is it better for them to travel and go to Venice and Lombardy, and have no fixed school in connection with the Academy at Rome?' To this Ruskin gave the forthright answer: 'If a man goes to travel, he ought to *travel* and not be plagued with schools!'

The conclusions and findings of the Royal Commission were favourable but qualified. They read: 'The opinions which we have heard from other witnesses are by no means unanimous upon this subject. It might, however, seem desirable that the Royal Academy should, its funds permitting, establish a small branch Academy at Rome, so far as regards, at least, the permanent residence of a professor, for a fixed term of years, and at a sufficient salary, who should have a general control of such travelling students of the Academy as might at any time desire to pursue their studies in that city (Rome) where the concourse of artists for study is certainly much greater than in any other city in the world'.

These conclusions and findings, it will be noted, carried no recommendations for the present or future to elevate the Academy of Arts in Rome to official status as a Government-protected body with affiliation to the Royal Academy. No practical steps were taken so far as I can discover. The artists and the Academy were left to their own devices. Severn had become more Consul than painter. The Academy was no longer housed in his palazzo. The appeal of Rome as an art centre declined in comparison with the full flood of its—shall I call it Romantic-revival-of-the-Classic?—period during the pontifical regime.

The Academy faded into obscurity in some narrow crowded street in the centre of the city—the students no longer shared the Sant'Isidoro quarters with its inspiring view 'all over magnificent Rome' as in Severn's younger days. In short, the British Academy of Arts sank into the doldrums, with members and interest at vanishing point. It is not until 1895 that we learn how low the Academy had sunk, and once again—like Sir Thomas Lawrence and Sir Charles

Eastlake—it is a President of the Royal Academy who takes steps to champion the Rome establishment. In a letter to *The Times*,¹³ Sir Edward Poynter (as a point of fact it was not until the following year that he took office as P.R.A.) revealed the position in Rome. He reported that the Rome Academy had retired into 'modest obscurity' because 'situated in inconvenient premises in one of the most crowded and noisiest thoroughfares in Rome . . .' its existence even was unknown to visitors to Rome.

Sir Edward then announced what was in effect to prove the revival of the Institution as a popular and well-known art centre. His letter goes on: 'This drawback of obscurity has recently been removed by the transfer of the Academy to convenient and well-lighted rooms forming a part of a small colony of studios in the Via Margutta, a quiet street behind the Via Babuino in the artists' quarter'.

He then describes the attractions of the new premises—the casts, the life-room, the library, and recalls that the first rule of the Academy is that every British artist on his arrival in Rome shall be admitted gratuitously to study in the Academy on application to the Secretary. By a new regulation, ladies are to be admitted as students.

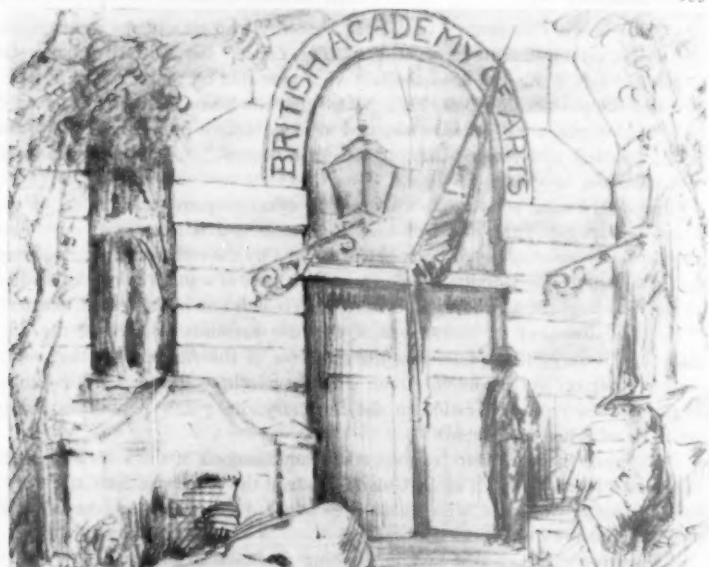
Sir Edward then refers to 'various other modifications of the rules suggested in a report recently drawn up by Colonel Slade at the request of Sir Clare Ford, our Ambassador in Rome, which have been adopted and which, it is hoped, will put the Academy on a better footing'.

It was from this date that each succeeding Ambassador became an *ex officio* Chairman of the Academy Committee—a most important and helpful recognition of the Academy's place in official esteem.

Sir Edward Poynter, in his letter to *The Times*, adds a little reflection of his own, and one can almost hear him sigh as he penned it. He says: 'Things are changed, no doubt, from the days when it was thought a necessary part of an artist's education to go to Rome, but in spite of changes of fashion, and other changes more lamentable, Rome still remains the capital and centre of art in its highest expression. . . . No one who would sound the heights—and depths—to which the noblest in art has attained can afford to ignore the lessons to be learnt there'. After that somewhat sibylline dictum, he suddenly concludes: 'Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, Alex. Coleman, Esq., 53B, Via Margutta, Rome'.

A roomy unpretentious palazzo, 53B was set in a picturesque courtyard fronting the tranquil Via Margutta—which is more like a country lane than a city street. This remained the Academy quarters until its closure forty-one years later.

Italian artists were encouraged to make use of the Academy—and this had a broadening effect on the studies of the students of both countries. It is perhaps one of the misfortunes of chance that the epoch in which this mingling of British and Italian students developed, was one in which Italian modern art in Italy had little to teach. Gone were the days when sculptors like Canova and the Academy of St. Luke added present inspiration to study of the ancients. But there were outstanding exceptions to the prevailing commonplace standards of Italian art of the time, and it is interesting to find that those Italians who



*Doorway of the Academy in the Via Margutta,
1934. (From a pencil sketch by an Academy student)*

made use of the facilities and comradeship of British Academy membership include the great names of Antonio Mancini, Aristide Sartorio, Ettore Tito, and F. P. Michetti.

In addition to the teaching activities of the Academy and its facilities for the art student, it developed notably as a centre for the continuing stream of the distinguished artists of yet further generations. The records of the Academy held references to the personal associations with it of Val Prinsep, Ford Maddox Brown, Alma Tadema, Poynter, Frederick Leighton, G. F. Watts, Walter Crane, John Sargent, Richard Shaw, and Alfred Gilbert.

So the Academy once again held a respected and recognized place with a reputation worthy to rival the other national institutions of similar character in the Italian capital. Unlike these other establishments, however, the Academy enjoyed no government subsidy, but its freedom in that respect gave it a pleasantly informal—almost Bohemian—character, one well calculated to stimulate original thinking and experiment.

The Academy was able to exist on the interest of its invested funds, on modest fees charged for special instructional classes, and on donations received from well wishers from time to time. And it was fortunate in having as its Honorary Director, a distinguished Maltese sculptor, Antonio Sciortino. In addition to

carrying out commissions for monumental work in pre-Revolutionary Russia, Brazil, Malta and Italy, he both directed the Academy and took its sculpture classes—and continued to do so for twenty-five years without fees of any kind.

Sciortino as a youth won an Italian scholarship to the Italian Royal Academy of Fine Arts and, on the conclusion of seven years' study there, was offered the chair of sculpture in the same Italian Institution. But Sciortino, as a British subject, had already been drawn to the Via Margutta. He rejected the Italian professorship in favour of a modest place as teacher of the sculpture classes at the British Academy, rising in time to be Honorary Director.

Things progressed in this manner with the old Academy as the representative British Art Institution in Rome until 1911, when the British School in Rome was created, with responsibility for the interests and domicile of the winners of a new competitive trophy—the Prix de Rome.

It was in 1910 that the minds of the Royal Commissioners in London in charge of the accumulated surplus funds of the Great Exhibition of 1851 turned to Italy and art. They determined to establish Rome Scholarships in painting, sculpture, engraving and architecture. Instead of approaching the venerable and experienced Academy, they put their project into the hands of a small but distinguished group of savants who had recently (1901) founded a British School of Archaeology in Rome.

In 1911 came a windfall—but not into the Academy lap. In that year the Italian Government presented the site which had been occupied by the British pavilion at an International Exhibition on the outskirts of Rome in perpetuity to the British nation. The British Government passed on the disposal of the gift to the 1851 Exhibition Commissioners. They vested the gift in the British Archaeological body in Rome which had meantime shrewdly expanded its constitution to embrace the fine arts. The result of these proceedings was made public in November, 1911,¹⁴ and by June of the following year a Royal Charter of Incorporation was granted to the School, conferring upon the new organization the power to create and maintain in Rome a national institution (to be known as The British School at Rome) for the study and practice of the fine arts, and for the study and investigation of the archaeology, literature, and history of Rome and Italy at every period. The Exhibition pavilion at the Valle Giulia was reconstructed in stone—and the British School, as we know it to-day, came into being. The President and the Vice-President of the erstwhile British School of Archaeology became Director and Vice-Director of the new national art institution, and took up residence within its marble halls.

The Academy carried on quite independently of all this sudden rise of a British School.

The First World War brought the normal art activities of both establishments to a halt. In 1919 the Academy under Professor Sciortino resumed its active life and began to unfold new plans. In the first place, Professor Sciortino aimed to make the work of the Academy complementary to that of the British School by concentrating on the provision of life classes, by increasing the mixture and exchanges of ideas with Italian artists and architects, by encouraging the social



Antonio Sciortino (1883-1947). (From a painting by Silvio Galimberti, 1929)

bonhomie of an Academy in the heart of Rome, by putting all these features at the service of the Prix de Rome men, rather isolated at the British School on the outer ring of the city.

Sciortino also planned something more ambitious.¹⁵ He set up a project to transform the BRITISH ACADEMY OF ARTS IN ROME, into a BRITISH COMMONWEALTH ACADEMY OF ARTS IN ROME. By 1926 thirteen students had been enrolled from Australia; ten from Canada; five from South Africa; six from New Zealand; and nine from Malta. An option on building sites in Rome for Commonwealth studios, and land at Spoleta for a Commonwealth outdoor school of painting

were secured for this expansion. The collaboration of Dominion Governments was invited.

On the immediate Rome side, an impetus was given to the Academy—at this phase the average student membership was fifty-five—by a bequest of £600 from Colonel Calderon for yearly prizes, and from the Selwyn Brinton Bequest for annual medal awards.

The honorary or visiting members of the Academy in 1926 included Sir Guy Dawber, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects; Sir Banister Fletcher; the British Consul, Bernard Sullivan, and Victor Cunard. Friendship and co-operation with the British School were complete, and in 1926 the then Director of the British School, Dr. Bernard Ashmole, became also an Honorary Member of the British Academy.

But dark clouds were once again gathering to break in new storms over Rome. The Fascist Government was now in complete power, and the British Academy was one of their many victims of intrigue, propaganda and attack.

The '*Italianità*' of Malta was at the forefront of Mussolini's growing anti-British campaign. Temptations were offered to lure Sciortino away from the Academy and give him (if he would, as a Maltese, declare for Italy) spectacular commissions in the monumental building plans of the Fascists. These overtures were met with a chuckling contempt which stung the bullies. They began to interfere with the presence of Italian citizens at the Academy classes.

During the Abyssinian Sanctions troubles of 1935, Blackshirt interference flared into active hostility. Blackshirts picketed the doorways against the students. Some were beaten up. Their spies and informers harassed the British and openly menaced Professor Sciortino and all Maltese as well as Italian students. Fascist wrath thus threatened one of the fundamental characteristics of the Academy as a meeting ground for British, Dominion and Italian artists.

Fascist thugs defaced the façade of the Academy, obliterating the title with tar, and covering the door and walls with soot and dirt. Sir Eric Drummond (later Earl of Perth) as British Ambassador and as Honorary President of the Academy Committee, protested to the Italian Foreign Office. But before any reply came from that quarter, a group of Italian artists came forward at personal and political risk, and cleared off the defacements. While that spontaneous gesture of loyalty and regard was some solace to Professor Sciortino and helped the morale of the Academy personnel and students, it led to still more threatening activities by Fascist enemies.

By the end of 1935 Anglo-Italian relations were at breaking point. Traffic of people and ideas between the two countries was discouraged. At the British Academy, members, attendance, fees and funds sank and sank. The decision, forced by events, was reluctantly taken at a special meeting of the committee at the end of January, 1936, to 'suspend' the activities of the Academy 'indefinitely' and to evacuate the Academy premises.

The Academy archives, in quite a small tin box, were placed—as already noted—in the British Consulate, transferred later to the British Embassy at the Porta Pia, and since reported untraceable. The library books were put with

those of the British Institute, housed with the British Council in Rome, and catalogued apart. The collection of casts and studio furniture stood desolate in the Academy forecourt until disposed of. The students loitered disconsolately among the relics of their ended activity. The small remaining funds in the bank were 'frozen'.

It was sadly realized by all that no feasible alternative was possible. Professor Antonio Sciortino, thanked for his twenty-five years of devotion to the Academy and to British art in Rome, returned to his native Malta, where he suffered the bombardments of the Second World War and died heroically in 1947. And so ended the long and fluctuating fortunes of the British Academy of Arts in Rome and its last Director, Antonio Sciortino.

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2. *Memoirs of Thomas Jones, 1742-1803*, Walpole Society, Vol. 32.
3. *Messaggero*, Rome, 14th June, 1933.
4. R.A. Council Minutes, 8th March, 1823.
5. William Sharp's *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* (1892).
6. R.A. Council Minutes, 8th March, 1823.
7. History note in the Rome Academy's Prospectus (1933).
8. R. A. Lawrence letters, Vol. IV.
9. Severn letters, Keats House, Hampstead.
10. There is some authority instead for Vicolo dei Maroniti, (*Against Oblivion*, Sheila Birkenhead, 1943, p. 127).
11. Severn Letters, Keats House, Hampstead.
12. *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Present Position of the Royal Academy*, H.M. Stationery Office, 1863.
13. *The Times*, 15th January, 1895.
14. *The British School at Rome. A Note on the School and its Scholarships*, 1923. See also *Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, Balance Sheets and Accounts*, 31st December, 1923, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 2172.
15. Rome Academy's Prospectus (1933).

DISCUSSION

SIR WALTER GURNER, C.S.I.: There is just one gap I should be interested to know if the lecturer could fill, and that is, what were the factors that led to the constitution of the Royal Commission in London in 1861?

THE LECTURER: The factors concerned the Royal Academy. The White Paper on the Commission is quite a large volume, and I was concerned only with the references to the Rome Academy in it. Therefore I paid no attention to the precedents and to working out the reasons for calling the Commission.

MR. H. BAILLIE RITCHIE: Do you think there is any prospect of the Academy being revived? It seems to me rather a blow to British prestige that we have nothing of the kind in the capital of Italy, the capital of the Western World for many centuries.

THE LECTURER: I am unauthorized to make anything except a very personal and almost emotional reply. I agree; and I think that Sciortino in his idea of a Commonwealth British Academy has dropped the seeds of something that is very valuable. On the other hand, we have got to remember—and the Chairman will bear me out on this—that Rome as an art training centre has different values to-day than it had at the beginning of the century.

MR. GILBERT LEDWARD, R.A.: As the lecturer said, the British Academy has become merged with the British School at Rome. Were their funds made over to the British School at Rome? The British School at Rome does really serve that function; there are scholarships open to Commonwealth students and visitors coming from all over the world. It was felt that it rather took over the activities of the British Academy when that ceased to function.

THE LECTURER: Did I? I must not speak for the British School, an institution with which I have no connection at all—but the functions of the British School and the

British Academy were the same. The methods of carrying out those functions were different and the atmosphere in each place had its own character. There is no doubt that the British School upholds the banner of British art in the Italian capital. The Academy funds were frozen and, as far as I know, they still are; I do not know what has happened to them. I think that anybody authorized to consider the future of the British School, the British Academy, the British Council, or any of such Institutions in Rome, with Government aid, could soon make use of those funds when they were wanted.*

MISS MARJORIE KEITH STACKHOUSE: Is there any hope of the Academy re-opening?

THE LECTURER: The Academy closed in 1936; it is finished. I am afraid I did not make that clear enough. At the last Committee meeting it was decided with regret 'to suspend indefinitely'. That was the phrase used. We all knew in our hearts that it meant 'close up shop'. The word 'suspend' was really used because it allowed Sciortino to continue with his honorary title of Director. If the wording had been 'closed down', his rank, as it were, would have gone with it. Therefore, it was called 'indefinitely suspended', and that meant he could carry on his office, his name and rank; also it would not allow the Fascists to feel that they had won a mean little victory.

MR. W. THOMSON HILL: I feel that we need not fear any shame or embarrassment of any kind when we think of what British scholars are doing for the archaeology of Italy, of Rome and of Africa; they are taking a very important part in it. I do not think we need apologize. The proceedings of the Society for Roman Studies, for example, will show us some of the things that British scholars are doing, not merely for archaeology, but for architecture and other arts.

MR. J. PITCHER: The lecturer mentioned the difference in atmosphere between the Academy and the School. I should like to say just one word for the School. It is true that they tend to gather round the teapot at six o'clock, but I fear that it is lack of sufficient funds which drives them to it. If they had a little more money, they would fraternize a very great deal more with the local Italians.

THE LECTURER: I hope I have not seemed to be *parti pris* in this affair of the Academy and the School, but one thing we cannot escape from is that the Academy had been running over a century when the School was set up; it had been recognized again and again in correspondence and official documents as fulfilling a function in the manner it should, and fulfilling it in a way they thought it should do it; then comes along this gift from the Crystal Palace Commissioners for exactly the programme that the Royal Academy had always wanted the Academy in Rome to follow, and it just went round the corner. I am not concerned with whether that was good or bad, that is what happened.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we ought to thank Colonel Munro now, and I do not think we ought to go on ragging him about what other people have or have not done and what they ought or ought not to have done.

On behalf of us all I should like to thank him very much for his most interesting lecture.

The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation.

SIR E. GOODALE, C.B.E., M.C. (A Vice-President of the Society): The full title of this Society is the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. We do a great deal for manufacturers and commerce, and about once a year we do something for the fine arts, and that we have done this afternoon. We have with us to-day a very distinguished chairman. Looking up there I see that we

* I have now learned that, since 1950, the Academy's funds, both in Italy and the United Kingdom, have been held by the British School in Rome. I.S.M.

have had also a very distinguished President of the Royal Academy [Sir Joshua Reynolds] connected with this Society, and as we are celebrating this year our Bicentenary, it is rather pleasant to look backwards. There have been many associations between the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of Arts, and, I am glad to say, all of them were friendly. I think that the Academy has opened its doors only twice to exhibitions other than those of the fine arts, and on both occasions it was at the request of this Society. I hope these associations will continue in the future, and if we have the President himself coming to take charge of our proceedings, as he has done this afternoon, it augurs very well for the future.

I ask you to thank him very much.

The vote of thanks to the Chairman was carried with acclamation, and the meeting then ended.

OPENING MEETING OF THE 200TH SESSION

CORRIGENDUM

We regret the omission of the name of Sir Atul Chatterjee, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., in the report of the opening meeting published in the last issue of the *Journal*, from the list of Past-Chairmen of the Society who welcomed His Royal Highness The President on his arrival.

GENERAL NOTES

WRIGHT BROTHERS' JUBILEE EXHIBITION

A special exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first successful flight by the Wright brothers' aeroplane opens at the Science Museum on Tuesday, 16th December. Early ideas about powered flight by a man-carrying machine and its ultimate achievement by the Wright brothers on 17th December, 1903, will be illustrated by models, books, aeronautical relics and photographs.

The exhibition will remain open for about three months; on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sundays, 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.; admission free.

EVEREST TROPHY COMPETITION

The Wardens of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths have announced a competition, open to British subjects, for a piece of silver or silver gilt ceremonial plate to commemorate the 1953 ascent of Mount Everest. The trophy will be added to the Company's collection of modern silverwork. The sum of £75 has been made available for the winning designer's fee and for prizes. Designs should be sent not later than 30th January, 1954, to the Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, London, E.C.2, from whom full details of the competition can be obtained.

'PREFABRICATION'

A new magazine has just appeared entitled *Prefabrication*, which is to be devoted solely to the prefabricated building industry. It is the first periodical published in this country to specialize in the problems and achievements of this new building technique, which was responsible for Britain's exporting £7,000,000 worth of buildings last year. The variety of contributions in the first issue indicates the

publishers' aim to make *Prefabrication* international in scope and to consider the subject from the point of view both of the industry, and of the consumer in Britain and overseas; the contributors include Sir Alfred Bossom, Bt., M.P., Mr. Mark Hartland Thomas, O.B.E., and M. Le Corbusier. The periodical, which costs 2s. 6d. a copy or 30s. a year, can be obtained from the publishers, Prefabrication Publications, Ltd., 4, Vernon Place, London, W.C.1.

EXHIBITION OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Royal Photographic Society has arranged an exhibition of nature photography as part of the centenary celebrations which it has held this year. Prints and transparencies, in monochrome and colour, will be shown together with stereoscopic exhibits of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, insects, flowers and other forms of natural life, contributed by most of the outstanding nature photographers since this aspect of photography was first developed some fifty years ago. The exhibition, to which admission is free, will be held at 16, Princes Gate, London, S.W.7, from 1st to 22nd December, 1953, from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. daily, and to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

SHORT NOTES ON BOOKS

FROM THE SKETCH TO THE FINISHED PICTURE: OIL PAINTING. By *Leonard Richmond*. Pitman, 1953. 25s

The author's aim in this very practical book is to guide the beginner in oil painting through the various technical difficulties that he is likely to meet in his study of the art. He deals with materials and equipment, and in great detail with the means he has used to obtain the effects shown in the many illustrations.

THE CIDER FACTORY: PLANT AND LAYOUT. *Leonard Hill*, 1953. 20s

This is a translation of technical publication No. 2 of the Rural Engineering Service of French Ministry of Agriculture. It presents in condensed but very lucid form, with many diagrams, every detail of the manufacture of cider on a large scale, with appendices on calculations, refrigeration requirements, and the treatment of distillery residues.

INTERMEDIATE BOTANY. By *L. J. F. Brimble*. 4th edition. Macmillan, 1953. 20s

This fourth edition of a standard textbook has been brought up to date, and considerably rewritten and added to. The illustrations also have been extensively revised. It covers the whole field of botany, and is suitable for students up to first-year university level.

THE QUEEN'S SILVER. By *A. G. Grimstead*. *The Connoisseur*, 1953. 21s

The silver described in this well-illustrated book is that in the Queen's personal collection. The sixty-four photographs show pieces dating from the seventeenth century to to-day, and the text describes many other examples, and relates them to the development of the craft.

LATER ENGLISH ROMANESQUE SCULPTURE, 1140-1210. By *George Zarnecki*. *Alec Tiranti*, 1953. 15s

This is a sequel to the author's book covering the period 1066-1140. It is particularly concerned with the many new influences which from the middle of the twelfth century began to make themselves felt in England. There are 133 excellent photographs.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF 1853

From the report of the discussion which followed the reading by Alexander Fraser of a paper On the Consumption of Smoke.

Professor Brande said, that in his opinion we were deeply indebted to Lord Palmerston, for having successfully undertaken the mitigation of the smoke nuisance in London, and to Messrs. Truman, Hanbury & Co., who had taken such decided steps for practically carrying out the subject in their large establishment. We had often heard it stated, apparently upon high authority, that the business of a brewery could not be carried on without the production of a large quantity of smoke; and that, although it might be possible to apply smoke-preventers to the engine-furnaces, they never could be brought effectually to bear upon the brewing coppers. Mr. Fraser, in the very clear statement with which he had favoured the Society, had shown that this was a mistake; and with due care and trouble the gigantic issues of black smoke from breweries, with which we were but too familiar, might not only be greatly diminished, but almost entirely got rid of; and, what was the most important of all, that this might be effected at a very considerable saving in the article of coals—a saving so large as to cover the cost of the very expensive machinery constituting the smoke-consuming apparatus which they had adopted.

Some Activities of Other Societies and Organizations

MEETINGS

- MON. 14 DEC. Electrical Engineers, Institution of, Savoy Place, W.C.2. 5.30 p.m. *Will Transistors oust Receiving Valves?* (Discussion.)
Geographical Society, Royal, S.W.7. 8.15 p.m. Tom Harrison: *Inside Borneo*.
Imperial Institute, S.W.7. 5.45 p.m. David Schloss: *Off the Beaten Track: The Royal Tour of Australia and New Zealand*.
Transport, Institute of, at Jarvis Hall, 66 Portland Place, W.1. 5.45 p.m. Henry Spurrier: *Road Transport and the Manufacturer*.
- TUES. 15 DEC. Civil Engineers, Institution of, Great George Street, S.W.1. 5.30 p.m. G. C. Carrothers, Bryan Donkin and A. E. Margolis: *Primitive District Hoating Undertaking of the City of Westminster*.
Manchester Geographical Society, 16 St. Mary's Parsonage, Manchester, 3. 6.30 p.m. J. C. Trevor: *The Racial History of Britain*.
Refrigeration, Institute of, at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Storey's Gate, S.W.1. 5.30 p.m. G. G. Haselden: *Absorption Refrigeration*.
Textile Institute, at Midland Hotel, Bradford. 7.15 p.m. D. C. Snowden: *Recent Researches in Weaving*.
- WED. 16 DEC. British Kinematograph Society, at G.B. Theatre, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. 7.15 p.m. R. L. Hout: *Standardized Light Sources for Colour Photography*.
Electrical Engineers, Institution of, Savoy Place, W.C.2. 5.30 p.m. F. H. S. Brown: *Some Design Features of the Semi-Outdoor Power Station at Ince*.
Engenes Society, at the Royal Society, Burlington House, W.1. 5.30 p.m. Hermann Lehmann: *The Distribution of the Sickle Cell Trait in Africans and Indian Aborigines*.
Locomotive Engineers, Institution of, at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Storey's Gate, S.W.1. 5.30 p.m. W. A. Tuplin: *Some Questions About the Steam Locomotive*.
Modular Society, at the Royal Society of Arts, W.C.2. 7.30 p.m. Sergei Kadleigh: *Proportion and Symmetry in Relation to Modular Co-ordination*.
Photographic Society, Royal, 10 Princes Gate, S.W.7. 7 p.m. Miss Margaret Harker: *Pictorial Appeal*.
Victoria & Albert Museum, S.W.7. 6.15 p.m. Ralph Edwards: *Ham House, Petersham*.
- THURS. 17 DEC. Landscape Architects, Institute of, at the Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1. 6 p.m. Gordon Russell: *The Design of Garden Accessories*.
Road Transport Engineers, Institute of, at the Royal Society of Arts, W.C.2. 6.30 p.m. E. M. Dodds: *Lubricants and Greases for Road Transport Vehicles*.
Textile Institute, at 10 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, 3. 7 p.m. A. R. Urquhart: *Artificial Fibres from Natural Polymers*.
- FRI. 18 DEC. Mechanical Engineers, Institution of, Storey's Gate, S.W.1. 5.30 p.m. (1) H. G. Conway: *The New British Standard System of Limits and Fits*. (2) G. J. Pearmain: *The Practical Application of the New British Standard System of Limits and Fits*.
- MON. 21 DEC. Geographical Society, Royal, S.W.7. 5 p.m. Prof. Alan Ross: *Other's Northern Voyage*.
- TUES. 22 DEC. British Kinematograph Society, at G.B. Theatre, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. 7.15 p.m. T. R. Stobart: *Filming the Everest Expedition*.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- WED. 16 DEC. Building Centre, 26 Store Street, W.C.1. 12.45 p.m. Film Show: *House Building with a Tower Crane: Taken for Granted (Drainage)*.
- NOW UNTIL FRI. 18 DEC. St. John Ambulance Brigade, at Parson's Gallery, 70, Grosvenor Street, W.1. Exhibition: *Art in Medicine*.
- NOW UNTIL TUES. 22 DEC. Portrait Sculptors, Society of, at the Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Exhibition: *The Famous in Sculpture*.
- NOW UNTIL THURS. 31 DEC. Whitechapel Art Gallery. Exhibition: *East End Academy—1953*.
- NOW UNTIL SUN. 17 JAN., 1954. Science Museum, S.W.7. Exhibition: *Navigation To-Day*.
- NOW UNTIL 23 JAN., 1954. Arts Council, at the New Burlington Galleries. Exhibition: *Contemporary Art in Finland*.
- NOW UNTIL JAN., 1954. Imperial Institute, South Kensington, S.W.7. Exhibition: *Loyal Addresses Presented to Her Majesty by the Colonial Peoples on the Occasion of Her Coronation*.
- NOW UNTIL APR., 1954. Victoria & Albert Museum, S.W.7. Exhibition: *Bazaar Paintings from Calcutta*.

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